



# Paper Recycling Terminology

It is important to use the proper terminology when defining our industry's raw material supply and our products. Inconsistent and incorrect definitions cause a myriad of problems in government regulations. You may hear the following terms when talking about paper recycling and 100% recycled paperboard.

■ **Consumer.** Any user of a product for whom it was manufactured.

■ **Contaminant.** Any item or material that reduces the quality of paper for recycling or, in large quantities, makes it unrecyclable. Contaminants include metal, foil, glass, plastic, hot melt or pressure sensitive adhesives, food, hazardous waste, carbon paper, waxed boxes, and synthetic fabrics. Collecting paper commingled with other recyclables during the collection process may increase contaminant levels.

■ **Corrugated cardboard.** Layers of paper glued together with a fluted inner layer. This is the material used to make corrugated cardboard boxes (the most recycled product in the country).

■ **Fiber.** Small pieces of thread-like material that are woven together to give structure and strength to paper products. Fiber used in papermaking comes primarily from wood and recovered paper; cotton is also used to make certain products.

■ **Hard mixed paper.** This classification of recovered paper typically includes kraft paper, corrugated cardboard, and office paper—all paper with longer fibers. Paperboard packaging can also be included.

■ **High grade papers.** Usually deinked, these primarily include printed and unprinted white papers collected from converting operations, printing plants, and offices.

■ **Kraft paper.** Any paper made from sulfate pulp. The "kraft" paper in the

stationer's store is simply unbleached paper, presumably made by the sulfate process.

■ **Mill broke.** Any paper generated in a paper mill prior to completion of the papermaking process which is unsuitable for end use applications and is subsequently reused in the papermaking process.

■ **Mixed paper.** The comingling of various paper grades, such as old mail, paperboard packaging, magazines, copy and computer paper, egg cartons, etc. for recycling.

■ **#6 News.** Baled newspaper typically generated from newspaper drives and curbside collections. Prohibitive materials may not exceed 1%. Total outthrows may not exceed 5%.

■ **#8 News.** Baled, sorted, fresh newspapers, not sunburned, free from magazines, white blank, pressroom over-issues and paper other than news, containing not more than the normal percentage of rotogravure and colored sections. This grade must be tare-free, and no prohibitive materials are allowed. Total outthrows may not exceed one fourth of 1%.

■ **OCC.** An acronym for old corrugated containers.

■ **OMG.** An acronym for old magazines.

■ **ONP.** An acronym for old newspapers.

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# Paper Recycling Terminology (CONTINUED)

■ **OTD.** An acronym for old telephone directories.

**Outthrow.** Material that must be removed from paper delivered to a mill before the paper is recycled/repulped.

■ **Paperboard.** A generic term that includes heavy classes of paper. The most common are paperboard packages, which include folding cartons for foods and medicine, set-up boxes for games and jewelry, milk and juice cartons, composite cans for frozen concentrates, and beverage carriers.

■ **Post-consumer content.** Material from products that were used by consumers or businesses and were collected for recycling instead of being discarded as waste.

■ **Pre-consumer content.** Material from excess or damaged products generated during the manufacturing or converting process, before the product reached the final consumer.

■ **Prohibitive.** A prohibitive is any material that, if it exceeds allowed limits, would make recycled paper unusable as the grade specified. For example, if the quantity of prohibitives in grade #12, double-sorted corrugated, exceeds 1/2 of 1%, the bale might be downgraded to grade #11 corrugated containers, thus having less value to the seller.

■ **Pulp.** The solution resulting from blending wood, recovered paper, or in some cases, cotton with water to break it down into individual cellulose fibers. This is the fibrous material used to make paper.

■ **Recovered material.** Materials and byproducts that have known recycling potential, and that have been removed or diverted from solid waste, or that have never been discarded as solid waste and are intended for sale, use, reuse, or recycling whether or not such materials require subsequent separation and processing, excluding the virgin content of mill broke.

■ **Recovered paper.** Paper and paper byproducts that have known recycling potential, and that have been removed or diverted from solid waste, or that have never been discarded as solid waste and are intended for sale, use, reuse, or recycling whether or not such paper require subsequent separation and processing, excluding the virgin content of mill broke.

■ **Recovered paper grades.** These are the classifications of different types of recovered paper, each with its own value to manufacturers. While there are dozens of specific grades, they can be grouped into four categories: corrugated/kraft paper, newspapers, high-grade papers, and mixed papers.

■ **Recyclable.** Products that can be collected and remanufactured into new products after they've been used. Most grades of paper are recyclable. Recyclable products do not necessarily contain recycled materials.

■ **Recycled content.** The portion of a product or package that contains materials that have been recovered or otherwise diverted from the solid waste stream either during the manufacturing process or after consumer use (see pre-consumer and post-consumer content definitions above). Many paper products are made with 100% recycled content.

■ **Recycled fiber.** Fiber derived from recovered paper that is processed into a product or a form usable in the manufacture of a product.

■ **Recycled material.** That material resulting from the process of recycling.

■ **Recycled material content.** That portion of a product or material composed of recovered materials.

■ **Recycled paper.** Paper that is produced entirely from recovered paper.

■ **Recycling.** The total system by which recovered materials are collected, separated, processed, and reused or returned to use in the form of a marketable product.

■ **Reduction.** A collection of activities and actions that in combination or singularly lead to a net decrease in the quantity of municipal solid waste that requires disposal.

■ **RMP.** An acronym for residential mixed paper from curbside collection.

■ **Soft mixed paper.** Typically includes magazines and newspapers — or papers with shorter fibers. Paperboard packaging may also be included.

■ **Solid waste.** Any garbage, refuse, or sludge from a waste treatment plant, water supply treatment plant, air pollution control facility, or other item that has reached its intended end use and has been discarded, including solid, liquid, semi-solid, or contained gaseous material resulting from industrial, commercial, mining and agricultural operations and from community activities, but does not include recovered materials, solid or dissolved materials in irrigation return flows or industrial discharge which are point sources subject to permits under Sec. 402 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, as amended (86 Stat. 880), or source, special nuclear, or byproduct material as defined by the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (68 Stat. 923).

■ **Solid waste stream.** The system through which solid waste moves from the point of discard to disposal or recovery.

■ **Sorted office paper.** A mix of papers collected for recycling that includes white and pastel copy and writing paper; white, green-bar, and multi-stripe computer paper; letterhead and envelopes; notepads; advertising booklets, and fliers.

■ **Stickies.** Paper contaminants, which includes adhesives, thermal plastics, hot melts, or other substances that are not water-soluble.

■ **WCC.** An acronym for waxed corrugated containers.

■ **White office paper.** A mix of paper collected for recycling that includes white copy paper and writing paper; white, green-bar, and multi-stripe computer print-out; and white envelopes without plastic windows or labels.